DEWAN'S REPLY : Mr. Kesavan Unnittan, if you will look at paragraph 3 of Chapter III of the *Administration Report*, you will find that the number of cases in which recourse has been had to the issue of demand notices has undergone reduction. It is the intention of the Government to have as little recourse as possible to this process ; and if the fall in number that the *Report* shows for 1101 is maintained in future years also, I think you will not have reason to complain in regard to that matter. The question of reducing the cost of demand notices from four chackrams to—I think you said—one chackram is not such an easy matter. After all, it is not merely the cost of paper, and ink and the waste of pens or the pay of the *pakuthi* peon that we have to take into account. There are various other items also. Besides, it is necessary to have a certain amount to act as a deterrent on the defaulting tax-payer. What led me to think so now was your own instance of a gentleman who, though he has to pay only 7½ chs., feels lazy and waits till he gets the demand notice. I ask you, is it likely that this apathy, this indifference, will be reduced if the cost of the demand notice is reduced ? I am inclined to think that the indifference and the apathy will steadily increase with the reduction of the cost of the demand notice. It is a matter which was fully gone into, and carefully considered by the Legislative Council, and the Government found it necessary to accept the advice of the Land Revenue Commissioner that it is not possible to reduce it below four chackrams.

It is rather a remarkable instance that you mentioned, *viz.*, the case of a piece of land worth about Rs. 600 having been sold in auction for Rs. 29. I think it is an extreme case. However, I shall have that specific case enquired into by the Peishkar and see what was wrong there.

Your suggestion that, instead of paying *kist* in four stated periods, the tax may be paid in two instalments, is really worth considering. Unless there is some great difficulty in the taluk administration, it seems to me not a very difficult matter to arrange. I shall have that suggestion considered by the Land Revenue Commissioner and the Peishkars, and if it can be arranged without seriously inconveniencing anybody, I will see if it can be done.

6. Assignment of Land to Foreigners.

MR. NARAYANA PILLAI KOCHUKUNJU PILLAI (*Member, Pattanamtitta taluk*) dwelt at length on the evil consequences of the registry of a large area of over a lakh of acres in extent in the name of a foreign company alleged to have been under contemplation. Firstly, the area in question included the sources of the Manimala, the Pamba, the Arudai, the Kakkattar and the Kallar rivers. The spread of cultivation in this area would cause deposit of loose soil on the beds of those rivers and eventually cause their being silted up. That would seriously affect the agriculturists of Central Travancore, who mainly depended on those rivers for their water supply. Besides, soil would also be deposited on the *punja* fields rendering them less valuable. Again, the silting up of the rivers would cause floods during the rainy season and that would be another source of great damage to the adjoining lands and loss to their owners.

Secondly, the quantity of decayed leaf manure flowing down those rivers from the reserved forests would be reduced if the portions on their upper reaches be cultivated.

Thirdly, the main purpose of conserving reserved forests was for ensuring rainfall in the country. The Conservator of Forests himself had, in connection with the proposal to disafforest an extent of 750 acres, comprised in the *Mannankandam* and included in the Malayattur Reserved Forest, stated that the disafforestation of any additional area would be detrimental to public interests. But the member failed to see why the Conservator, a member of the Economic Development Board also, did not press the point when the question of the registry of this large area was discussed. In his opinion, the disafforestation of such a large area as 1,00,000 acres would seriously affect the rainfall of the country and cause scarcity of water in Central Travancore.

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Fourthly, the Sabarimalai temple devoted to Sasta, one of the most sacred deities of Hindu worship, attracted every year a large number of pilgrims who contributed more than Rs. 10,000 towards the income of the Devaswom Department. The sanctity of this temple and of the Kumbalam *todu* which is also considered as a sacred stream would be lessened if they were included in the plantations of a European Company and this would be a source of distress to the Hindu population.

Fifthly, there would be scarcity of labour. Twenty years ago, one could engage a cooly for 5 chs. a day. But, with the advent of the European planters, the wages had already increased. The contemplated scheme of alloting to the local people 400 acres from every 1,000 acres in the area proposed to be assigned and distributing that area in small blocks of 5 acres each would attract a large number of coolies from other parts of the State. This would render labour very dear and scarce to the ordinary landlords and agriculturists. They were already spending 10 per cent. of their income on wages to coolies.

Lastly, there was only an extent of 30 cents of land in the State per head of population. If lands were not reserved for the ever increasing population, the Government would have no remedy for the future unrest and unemployment in the State. When the people of the State wanted the disafforestation of swampy areas of small extents from the reserved forests for paddy cultivation, the Government appointed committees to select such lands. But in the case under reference, the Government had not felt the necessity for any such committee. If it was the idea of the Government to raise money by the contemplated registry, the people of the State would be willing to contribute the amount if forest lands adjoining registered holdings were sold in auction in small blocks of 5 acres each.

In view of the above facts the member prayed that further proceedings in respect of the proposed registry of land might be stopped.

DEWAN'S REPLY: You have just read out a long written essay full of facts and fancies of your own creation. I see you come from the Pattanamtitta taluk. Apparently, the Pattanamtitta taluk, which you come from, is a place where people have learnt the art of making one's flesh creep and of indulging in necromancy by which they see visions and call up phantoms and spirits. If you can read English, or if you can read Malayalam—as I presume you can—you would have seen from paragraph 12 of my Address yesterday that all that you dwelt upon with such eloquence and feeling is raised upon a foundation of nothing. To begin with, you seem to know more than everybody else. You seem to know that nearly 2,00,000 acres of cultivable tea lands exist in Travancore. I do not know. Nobody else knows. But you know. You seem to know that 1,00,000 acres have been assigned to some tea company. I do not know. No member of the Government knows. Nobody else of any responsibility knows. But you from Pattanamtitta seem to know. You seem to draw all sorts of conclusions based upon theories affecting rainfall on which even the scientific world has not made up its mind yet. You advance all sorts of theories on the questions of labour and capital. As far as I can make out, you want to get back to those good old days when you could get coolies for 5 chs. a day. But, fortunately for him, the poor cooly is now able to get his half a rupee or more every day; and that is a fact which you lament and deplore. Perhaps, that is how the landholders in Pattanamtitta view the question.

You further dwelt upon the larger questions affecting tea planting interests. Presumably, you are a large tea estate owner yourself. That is the only inference I can draw from the dogmatic way in which you speak on these matters. I would strongly advise you to study paragraph 12 of my Address and my speech in the Legislative Council, before you draw such conclusions from things which do not exist.

The next subject for representation was 'Sale of *puduval* lands to non-Travancoreans' by Mr. R. Nilakanta Pillai (*Member, Tiruvalla taluk, Group II*).* But before he began his representation, the Dewan said—

*The member was allowed to speak on the 23rd February, 1927.

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"Mr. Nilakanta Pillai, I see your representation relates to the sale of *puduval* lands to non-Travancoreans. If it relates to a matter covered by paragraph 12 of my Address, I do not think it necessary for you to make the representation, because you may traverse the whole ground already discussed here."

The next subject for representation was 'The various aspects of the contemplated assignment of an extensive tract of land to a European company' by Mr. S. Subbaraya Aiyar (*Member, Municipal Council, Haripad*).* But before he began his representation, the Dewan said—

"Mr. Subbaraya Aiyar, if the subject of your representation is the same as that covered by paragraph 12 of my Address, I am afraid it would not be fair to the Assembly if I allow you to take up their time for discussing a subject that has already been disposed of."

MEMBER: I have nothing to say but to bow to your ruling and return, as it is not open to me to question your ruling. Nevertheless, I present an appeal to hear one side of the question at least.

DEWAN: It is not the question of hearing one side of the case. There is no *question* at all. The only question is whether tea lands exist in Travancore and as regards that, I have explained the position fully yesterday. So, I say, it is not fair to allow you to waste the time of the Assembly for nothing.

MEMBER: I only want to submit that it is a matter for extreme regret—

DEWAN: This is an Assembly which has seriously to deal with business matters in a business-like way and so it is not fair for me to ask them to waste their time on speculative ideas and fanciful notions.

MEMBER: I am not raising chimerical visions; nor was I going to build upon fanciful theories. Anyway, I bow to your decision.

DEWAN: Thank you.

7. Rent on Kandukrishi lands.

Mr. CHANDY THOMAS (*Member, Ambalapuzha taluk, Group I*) in conveying an expression of gratitude of the *Kandukrishi* tenants for the gracious act of Her Highness the Maharani Regent in commuting into money payment the *paattam* payable on *Kandukrishi* wet lands said that, although, by the commutation scheme, the difficulties and inconveniences experienced by the tenants had abated, they had not completely vanished as the rate of commutation fixed was high. The newspapers in the State and the representatives of the people congratulated the tenants on the benefits derived by the scheme without correctly ascertaining the local conditions and realising the real difficulties of the people. The commutation rate had been based mainly upon the statements made by Mr. K. K. Thomas in the Legislative Council and by the member for the Neyyattinkara taluk at the fourteenth session of the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly. The wishes of the people at large had not been ascertained; and in order to attain fully the intended object, some more changes were necessary.

The first change needed was the reduction of the commutation rate. One of the items of loss incurred by the tenants under the system of payment in kind was under *alavu vasi* or allowances made for shortage in measuring paddy. Under the commutation scheme, there was no necessity to make this allowance. But the money required for payment of the *paattam* at the commutation rate could be raised only if the paddy given as *alavu vasi* was also sold. The average price in Kuttanad for the past five years was 16 chs. per *Kallurkadan para* while according to the commutation rate of 6 fanams per standard *para* the price would work out to 19¼ chs. The price would go down still further in future years with the increase in the quantity of paddy available. During certain periods of the year, the price would be high, but it would not be possible for the ordinary ryot to pay the rent in the first instance and store the paddy till the prices rose; nor would it be possible for him to borrow money for the payment of rent.

As regards the average market rate adopted by the Government as the basis for fixing the commutation rate, the member said that the highest price fetched by the sale of paddy from Government granaries was only 5½ fanams a *para*. The ordinary *nirak* rate prevailing in the markets or the rate adopted by the civil courts

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